

Message Text

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SUBJECT: GENOA FAIR MANAGER'S ESTIMATE OF COMMUNIST FESTIVAL

REF; GENOA 0583

DURING LUNCH CONVERSATION NYESTERDAY, DR. GIUSEPPINO ROBERTO, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF GENOA'S INTERNATIONAL FAIR, VOLUNTEERED THE FOLLOWING PERSONAL INSIGHT ON THE COMMUNIST (PCI) FESTIVAL WHICH IS BEING HELD ON HIS FAIRGROUNDS:

1. PCI CLAIMS OF 1,000,000 VISITORS FOR FIRST TWELVE DAYS OF THE FESTIVAL, WHICH BEGAN ON SEPTEMBER 2 AND WILL CLOSE ON SEPTEMBER 17, ARE HIGHLY EXAGGERATED. ROBERTO AND HIS STAFF, WHO ARE EXPERTS AT CROWD COUNTS, ESTIMATE A FIGURE CLOSER TO "WELL LESS THAN HALF" THAT OF THE PCI.

2. THE VARIOUS PARTY DEBATES AND CONFERENCES HAVE SO FAR DRAWN RELATIVELY FEW PEOPLE AND, FROM ROBERTO'S PERSONAL OBSERVATION, HAVE IMPRESSED NEITHER THE AUDIENCES NOR THE PRESS AND MEDIA.

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3. MOST VISITORS, MANY OF WHOM, ACCORDING TO ROBERTO, ARE CITY MILITANTS, WHO ARE "ORDERED" TO BE PRESENT EVERY DAY, GO TO THE FESTIVAL MORE TO PARTAKE OF ITS "GASTRONOMIC AND ENTERTAINMENT" OFFERINGS THAN TO LISTEN TO OR PARTICIPATE IN PARTY POLITICAL DEBATES.

4. IF IT IS TRUE THAT THE FESTIVAL IS NOT THE POLITICAL/PROPAGANDA SPECTACULAR THAT THE PCI AND OTHERS EXPECTED, IT IS CERTAINLY TRUE THAT IT IS A CONSIDERABLE COMMERCIAL SUCCESS. ACCORDING TO ROBERTO, THIS IS DUE TO THE LARGE NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS THAT PCI CAN COUNT ON FOR ALL SORTS OF SERVICES AND GOODS. ROBERTO ESTIMATES THAT "TWO THIRDS OF THE FINANCIAL TAKE" OF THE VARIOUS AND SOUNDRY RESTAURANTS AND FOODSTANDS IS CLEAR PROFIT.

5. BUSINESSMEN AND ENTREPRENEURS IN THE AREAS NEAR THE FAIRGROUNDS ARE KEENLY DISAPPOINTED OVER THE "MEAGER" ADDITIONAL BUSINESS THAT THE FESTIVAL HAS BROUGHT THEM SO FAR. ACCUSATIONS OF "FAVORITISM" FOR THE PCI ARE BEING LEVELLED AGAINST GENOA'S LEFTIST ADMINISTRATION BY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION.

6. ACCORDING TO ROBERTO, THE PCI WILL GO ALL OUT FROM HERE ON IN ORDER TO GENERATE LARGE CROWDS ESPECIALLY FOR THE FINALE OF SEPTEMBER 17, WHEN SECRETARY GENERAL BERLINGUER WILL CLOSE THE FESTIVITIES WITH A MAJOR ADDRESS. SOME 20 SPECIAL TRAINS AND ONE THOUSAND BUSES WILL BE MOBILIZED BY THE PCI ORGANIZERS TO BRING IN THE FAITHFUL FROM NORTHERN AND CENTRAL ITALY. ROBERTO EXPECTS THAT SOME 150 THOUSAND PEOPLE WILL JAM THE FAIRGROUNDS ON SEPTEMBER 17 TO LISTEN TO THE WORD ACCORDING TO BERLINGUER.

7. COMMENT: WITH MINOR VARIATIONS, THE OBSERVATIONS OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DR. ROBERTO AND HIS STAFF APPEAR TO CONFIRM OUR OWN INITIAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE FESTIVAL AS REPORTED IN REFTEL. DISCIULLO

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